

Edwards: Economic Recovery Plan Includes \$7 Billion for Military, Veterans Facilities to Stimulate Economy, Create Jobs

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Representative Chet Edwards released the following statement after the House Appropriations Committee passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan Wednesday:

“Our nation faces the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression, and we must act responsibly to prevent this crisis from deepening. Our highest priority has to be putting our economy on solid ground with passage of a responsible economic stimulus that protects American jobs and stabilizes our economy.

“Once we enact measures to stimulate the economy, create jobs, and begin to pull out of this recession, we must get back to balancing the budget.”

Edwards, who chairs the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, is responsible for crafting the portion of the economic recovery plan that invests \$6 billion for military hospitals and housing, and \$1 billion for VA facilities. The funding provides for much-needed jobs through targeted investments to improve the quality of life for our service members and veterans, support the National Guard and Reserve, and assist economic development assistance in local communities.

“As we begin our work to stabilize and strengthen the American economy and preserve our way of life, we must also honor those veterans and military families whose sacrifice and service to this great nation are vital to the preservation of our democracy.”

“We honor these brave Americans and their families with better health care and housing, with better child care and other facilities. We are creating jobs with this bill, but we are also creating something lasting for those brave Americans who asked for nothing but the opportunity to serve,” said Edwards.

According to the Associated General Contractors of America, military construction, like all other non-residential construction, will create and sustain jobs—28,500 jobs per \$1 billion spent. In addition to stimulating the economy and creating jobs, the funding will also serve those troops, veterans, and their families who sacrifice everyday on behalf of this nation.

As President Obama said yesterday, “We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service; a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves.”

The legislation will go to the House floor for a vote next Wednesday.

Edwards is a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Military Construction

Hospitals: \$3.75 billion to recapitalize our aging military hospitals and ambulatory centers.

Troop housing: \$1.2 billion to build new barracks and dormitories for our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen, and address a large backlog to support a growing force.

Child care: \$360 million for new child development centers on base.

Guard/Reserve: \$400 million for the Guard and Reserve to support our reservists who have been so heavily deployed in recent years, as well as helping States who need Guard units for disaster assistance and homeland security.

BRAC: \$300 million to speed up environmental cleanup associated with the first four BRAC rounds. The Department estimates a roughly \$3.5 billion backlog in cleanup, and this funding will help local communities redevelop those lands.

Veterans Administration Facilities

Veterans Medical Facilities: \$950 million for veterans’ medical facilities. The Department has identified a \$5 billion backlog in needed repairs, including energy efficiency projects, at its 153

medical facilities.

Veterans Cemeteries: \$50 million to put people to work making monument and memorial repairs at cemeteries for American heroes.